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The Sport of Amateur Housekeeping

By ANNA JACOBSON, College Library

I FEEL properly apologetic for venturing to introduce the Amateur Homemaker to her sister professionals; for, quite rightly, the amateur is not highly regarded by the finished artist. It is much as if the first-reader class should call on Professor Noble to give him some pointers on literature. Still, there may be a place in some corner for the amateur also, when she scrupulously refrains from encroaching on the preserves of the professional, and contents herself with housekeeping as a sport.

Now, a sport should not be tainted with professionalism. The game is the thing. It should have an element of chance, and not be taken too seriously. The amateur is a free lance. She has no standard to maintain. She may admiringly and candidly admit that standardization is one of the front wheels of progress, and yet have her little fling at standardized diets, color-schemes, and kitchens. Let the amateur stalk forth blithely to her impressionistic, sketchy, irresponsible, and adventurous housekeeping. It is a good, sane, homely game, if you take it that way. Only, you must shut your ears to the everlasting Hallelujah chorus of efficiency, or you are lost.

Housekeeping, as a sport, is perhaps particularly adapted to the middle years, tho there is no time limit. The very young may feel a stronger call to the movie, the dance, or mah-jong; others may prefer to manage clubs, or engage passionately in social uplift, in their leisure hours. Housekeeping is commended to the betwixt-and-between folks who have no strong predilections or brilliant accomplishments to lend gayety to more colorful recreations.

I admit candidly that housekeeping is a rather exacting sport, and takes large toll of one's precious spare time. It will not, for instance, leave you so very much time to improve your mind; but privately I think it is good for our minds to be left alone once in a while, to grow, instead of having facts stuffed into them over-time. Anyway, I don't want to improve my mind. I want to do all sorts of silly pleasant things with my hands. I want to go home and scrub floors, bake a big luscious pie, and paint my kitchen chairs blue, or maybe a primrose yellow. In season I want to stick some seeds in the ground (a garden belongs with a house), and have them astonish me by coming up bravely to shower joy on an undeserving gardener.

If you combine gardening (for fresh air) and scrubbing (for exercise) you have a combination that beats golf for the sedentary worker, and you have something to show for it besides. Then, think how tired you get of the other woman's taste—or lack of it—in wallpaper and rugs, salads and desserts. Think of having rooms (in the plural!) even to attic and cellar and kitchen.

Nor is the sport necessarily expensive, as it incidentally provides for the everyday necessities of food and shelter. Period furniture, oriental rugs, refectory tables, and breakfast alcoves, are not essential; tho a gateleg table and an arm

chair of individuality—say, with permanently waved legs—give a pleasant air of gentility to the humblest abode.

But whatever you lack, be sure to have a kitchen. I insist on that kitchen. It is the visible manifestation of a spiritual need. I know the social millenium is going to do away with the kitchen, and a few hundred expert cooks will cater to the million consumers. All the more reason to enjoy the fragrant, spicy hours and come into the kitchen while you have a chance. Try one of "Bettina's salads," or "1000 ways to please a husband" (even if you haven't any to please!). Kitchen literature is full of delights if one chooses judiciously. There is a real thrill when you come across "Living on \$500 a year"; and if you yearn for the pencil-figure, take courage; you may "Eat and grow thin." There are other thrills, too; for cooking, like aeroplaning, has its little explosions and sudden falls.

It is a mistake to regard the kitchen as devoid of romance because it deals with primitive elemental wants. To scrub, to

BEAUTIFUL LAND

By Aynbah J. Latham

When first I saw Manhattan,
With miles of human hives,—
Tier above tier, all crowded
With swarming human lives,—
I worried for the millions
Of hungry to be fed,
And wondered where on earth was grown
The grain to make their bread.

But yesterday in riding
Across your fertile plains,
I saw a million farm lands
All golden with their grains:
So I no longer worry;—
The hungry will be fed;
Iowa is God's handmaid;
She serves our daily bread.

ENCORE

And now we understand in part
Whence cometh our bread,
New York, remember Iowa
When Grace is said.

Prof. A. J. Latham is an instructor in public speaking at Columbia University. She attended the late Vocational Education Conference at Ames, and delivered several splendid addresses at the conference.

She was greatly inspired by the beauty of the campus and the spirit of the students at Ames, so much so that she has promised to write us a poem about Ames. The above is one of her impressions of Iowa:

It is interesting to note the conditions under which Miss Latham wrote this poem: while on her way to Ames, she was delayed three hours by a freight train wreck and wrote this poem while waiting.

—Mary Simons.

cook, to bake, to plow, to sow—all the plain, hard manual tasks—bring one to close contacts with existence at its starkest and simplest. That, indeed, is the inmost charm of housekeeping, as it is of farming. Do you remember the sowing of the seed in Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil"? That is the epic of the farm, but there is a humble epic of the kitchen, too. Not that the kitchen is a "literary" place—Heaven forbid! But for all that, it has an honored place in literature, from Theocritus to Rupert Brooke.

Everyone knows what an inimitable Roast Pig came out of Charles Lamb's kitchen, but Carlyle's and Emerson's amusing correspondence on cornmeal and Johnny-cake is less well known. Characteristically, Carlyle ends with a dityramb on the transatlantic Johnny-cake:

"It is really a small contribution towards world history, this small act of yours and ours. * * * How beautiful to think of lean, tough Yankee settlers, tough as gutta percha, with most occult, unsubduable fire in their bellies, steering over the western mountains to annihilate the jungle, and bring bacon and corn out of it for the posterity of Adam. The pigs in about a year eat up all the rattlesnakes for miles around, a most judicious function on the part of the pigs. Behind the pigs comes Jonathan, with his all-conquering ploughshare—glory to him, too! Oh, if we were not such a set of cant-ridden blockheads there is no Athene or Herakles equal to this fact:—which will find its real 'Poets' some day or other!"

You may not be one who can sing the song of the Johnny-cake and its relations; but when the all-too-short day of housekeeping comes to a close, you view your handiwork and declare it good. Now comes the reward of your toil. In this closet space of time you savor life, happy, indeed, if you have a beloved guest to share with you the lovely, homely things in quiet companionship:

"Filled may thy fair mouth be with honey, Thyrsis, and filled with honey-comb; and the sweet dried fig mayst thou eat of Aegilus, for thou vanquishest the cicada in song! Lo, here is thy cup: see, my friend, of how pleasant a savour! Thou wilt think it has been dipped in the wellspring of hours."

An Interview With Scottish Hockey Coach

(Continued from page 5)

are built for sports—and they go out for them. I refer not only to college women, but all. They have much greater endurance. I have seldom seen an English hockey player 'winded.' They may play for 30, 60, or 90 minutes and never show signs of fatigue.

"American girls as a whole do not enter sports so wholeheartedly, consequently they never attain the endurance which comes only from long training. However, they are very apt, and I only regret that I cannot remain longer to produce a championship team here at Iowa State College."